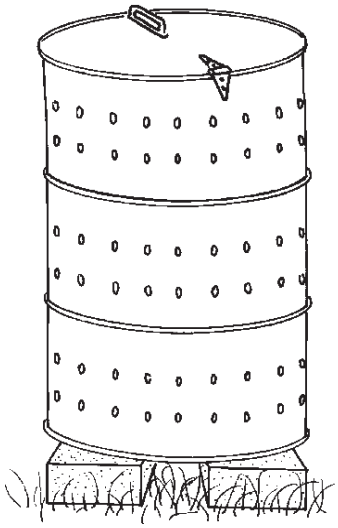

Figure 1

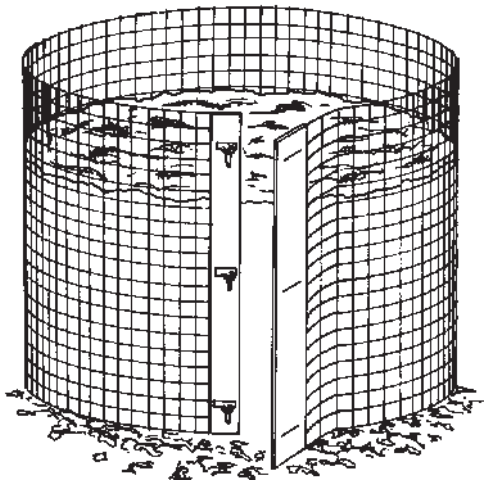

Figure 2

rows of 1/2 inch holes over the length of the barrel to allow for air circulation and drainage of excess moisture. Place the barrel upright on blocks to allow bottom air circulation. Fill the barrel 3/4 full with organic waste material and add about 1/4 cup of high (approximately 30%N) nitrogen containing fertilizer. Apply water until compost is moist but not soggy.

Every few days, turn the drum on its side and roll it around the yard to mix and aerate the compost. The lid can be removed after turning to allow for air penetration. Ideally, the compost should be ready in two to four months. The barrel composter is an excellent choice for the city dweller with a relatively small yard.

For larger quantities of organic waste, bin type structures are the most practical. As an example, a circular bin can be made by using a length of small spaced woven wire fencing and holding it together with chain snaps **(Figure 2)**. The bin should be about three to five feet in diameter and at least four feet high. A stake may be driven in the middle of the bin before adding material to help maintain the shape of the pile and to facilitate adding water. With this design, it is easiest to turn the composting material by simply unsnapping the wire, moving the wire cylinder a few feet, and turning the compost back into it.

A very efficient and durable structure for fast composting is a three-chambered bin **(Figure 3)**. It holds a considerable amount of compost, and allows good air circulation. The three chambered bin works on an assembly line idea, having three batches of compost in varying stages of decomposition. The compost material is started in the first bin and allowed to heat up for three to five days. Next, it is turned into the middle bin for another 4-7 days, while a new batch of material is started in the first bin. Finally, the material in the middle bin is turned into the last bin as finished or nearly finished compost.

To make a three-chambered bin, it is best to use rot resistant wood such as redwood, salt treated wood or wood treated with an environmentally safe preservative or a combination of treated wood and metal posts. Unless the wood is treated or rot resistant, it will decompose within a few years. Each bin should be at least three to five feet in each dimension to contain enough volume to compost properly. Using removable slats in the front offers complete access to the contents for turning.

The compost pile should be located close to where it will be used and where it will not interfere with activities in the yard or offend neighbors. From the aesthetic point of view, it is best to compost in a location screened from view of both your property and neighbor's property. Examples of good locations for the pile include: near the garden or between the garage and house. Do not locate the compost pile near a well or on a slope that drains to surface water such as a stream or a pond. The pile will do best where it is protected from drying winds and in partial sunlight to help heat the pile. The more wind and sun the pile is exposed to, the more water it will need. Locating the pile too close to trees may also create problems as roots may grow into the bottom of the pile and make turning and handling the compost difficult.

Organic wastes, such as leaves, grass, and plant trimmings are put down in a layer eight to ten inches deep. Coarser materials will decompose faster if placed in the bottom layer. This layer should be watered until moist, but not soggy. A nitrogen source should be placed on top of this